

AMES - PATON HOUSE
PINOLA INDIANA

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
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AMES - PATON HOUSE
Pinola, LaPorte County, Indiana

Owner Maurice E. Paton

Date of Erection 1842

Builder Captain Charles Ames

Present Condition Generally good, only minor repairs required. West wing later, new chimney added, south door and windows changed. Asphalt shingles cover old wood shingles.

Number of Stories One-and-a half with small cellar.

Materials of Construction: Braced oak dimensioned frame on rubble, brick and stone foundations with a field stone and brick chimney. Floors, interior and exterior walls are oak. Partitions plastered on split lath with poplar wainscots. Clapboards and shingles are poplar on poplar sheathing. Floors, trim and doors are poplar, ash, white pine with panels and cabinets walnut. Outside trim is walnut. Hardware is wrought iron.

Additional Data: The house was built by Captain Charles Ames, an officer in the War of 1812. He was one of the earliest pioneers of Northwestern Indiana. The Ames family had lived in West Bridgewater, Plymouth County, Massachusetts since 1640. After the War of 1812, Captain Ames became associated with the Ames Shovel Works of Boston, a family enterprise. Like his cousin, William Cullen Bryant, he wrote poetry and kept a diary. In 1836 he came to Indiana with his family by Erie Canal to Buffalo, and thence to Michigan City, Indiana, by schooner.

The same year Ames built a log cabin, which served as shelter until land could be cleared and a more adequate home built. His wife died the first summer, leaving him with two small sons. She was buried under a huge walnut tree close to the cabin.

In 1838 the barn was built, having timbers sixty feet long and one foot square, each hewed from one giant oak tree. By this time enough native poplar, walnut, and oak had been sawed and carefully seasoned in the farm kiln to build the new house. However, the

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kiln caught fire and burned to the ground, together with the lumber for the house. It was necessary for Ames to wait until early in 1842 before he again had enough lumber to commence construction of his house.

Ames planned the house along the lines of his boyhood home in Plymouth County, Massachusetts. In addition to supervising construction, he made the nails, hinges, latches, cranes, and other ironwork in his own forge on the farm. The house was completed in the Fall of 1842, so that Ames might move in with his new bride before the closing in of winter.

The house is of middle eighteenth century New England braced frame construction on a foundation of native stone and locally burned brick. Three fireplaces on the first floor share the huge central chimney. High on the left side of the fireplace in the old kitchen is the brick baking oven.

The house stands upon a plot of four acres on the edge of a large woods. It faces the south, in order to get the full benefit of the winter sunshine, disregarding the highway, which passes at some distance to the north and east. Many of the first floor windows are on the south side; the upstairs windows are in the gables, with no windows in the second-floor front at all. The sashes have rather thin and narrow rails. Many of the sashes are of the nine-over-six variety. Some have the original glass, which is very thin and uneven. There is a plain, square row of lights over the front door. Shutters were not used on the house.

Following the marriage of his elder son in 1856, Captain Ames constructed another house on the same plot, and about three hundred feet away. The houses, together with the old barn and outbuildings, cluster around a tree-shaded green. Beyond are the orchards and rolling fields of a farmstead of one hundred seventy acres. All this was much like Ames' native New England.

Ames lived in the house until his death in his eighty-sixth year. He left the property to his elder son, Augustus. A third generation resided in the house until 1936, completing one hundred years of family ownership. As there were no direct heirs, the property passed into the hands of the present owner in 1940.

Sources of Information:

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- Marshall, Lucille, "New England Lines Seen in Pinola Home", News-Dispatch, August 5, 1954, Michigan City, Indiana.
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